

where the public mind was greatly excited by Northern hostility to the extension of slavery, and end by steeping the country in blood and ruin, appeared, in the autumn of 1860, about to be realized. The secession so long and repeatedly threatened by South Carolina, but which she had never seriously contemplated carrying out, seemed at last imminent. The incredulity with which those threats had been received by union men north and south; the ridicule lavished upon the so called "Chivalry men," who were accused of indulging in the frothy effusions of demagogues—in low tricks and bluster to keep up their credit and consequence, operating with their real grievances, had goaded the Carolinians to desperation. The people of the Pelmetto State who had been so long upbraided for fickleness and perfidy, seemed at last ready for action, and a considerable portion of the South was prepared to follow their lead. The atmosphere was laden with electricity, the political sky overcast with clouds—the storm ready to burst upon the land. The immediate occasion of this breaking out of the public fury was the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency. It does not belong to my plan to enter into the causes and consequences of this event. They are mentioned only in so far as they relate to, and bear upon, the subject of this sketch. Mr. Lincoln was chosen on 6th of November 1860, the vote standing thus,

For Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, 189, all northern votes.

For John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, 72 southern votes.

For John Bell, of Tennessee, 39, divided.

For Stephen A Douglas, of Illinois, 12, divided.

The whole number of electors appointed to vote for President for the United States was then 303, of which a majority is 152. Mr. Lincoln was, therefore, declared elected, and on the 8th of the following February left his home in the West, for Washington. This event increased the southern excitement; anxiety and alarm thickened the gloom which hung over and paralysed trade, commerce and manufactures north and south. The well known political views of South Carolina filled the country with apprehensions. In 1830, that State attempted to nullify the laws of Congress, to remain in the Union and yet act independently of its authority, and a conflict between the State and Federal troops was averted only by the firmness of President Jackson and the moderation of General Winfield Scott. Again in 1850, at the period when the admission of California was under discussion, it was proposed in the Legislature of South Carolina that a "Southern Congress" should be convoked to initiate measures for the defence of the South. A crisis was averted, however, by the adoption of what was termed the "*Compromise Bill*" principally through the influence of Henry Clay, but, though South Carolina acquiesced, she was annoyed, discontented, irritated. All the angry feelings which prompted this course in 1850 were intensified by the result of the Presidential election of 1860. Accordingly, the Legislature called a State convention to take such steps as might be deemed

necessary to meet the crisis before the inauguration of the new President. This convention assembled at Columbia on the 17th of December, 1861, and after an exciting debate passed a formal Ordinance of Secession from the Union, in these words,

“ We, the people of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained, that the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention on the 23rd day of May, 1788, whereby the Constitution of the United States was ratified, and also all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of the State ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, and the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and the other States under the name of ‘ the United States of America,’ is hereby dissolved.”

The fatal plunge was thus taken, and how to avert the untold calamity it portended was the first object with all true patriots, especially of Virginians, whose State, in the event of hostilities, was to become “the Flanders of the war.” It was natural that the Old Dominion should watch, with greater solicitude than any of her sister States, the progress of events in the South. Virginia contributed more largely than any of the original thirteen colonies to the formation of the Federal Union, in fact it was mainly her work, and her people were by a large majority still warmly attached to it and its traditions, yet, from identity of interest on the slave question, she felt the warmest sympathy with

the States of the South. All eyes were, therefore, now turned to the Old Dominion. Upon her course in great measure depended that of the so-called border States of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. It rested with Virginia and these States to say whether war should or should not take place. Had these border States, with an aggregate population of 4,621,879 united in upholding the Union of their forefathers, the Cotton States, left in a hopeless minority, must have refused to enter upon the ruinous path taken by South Carolina. In this event the sober second thought of the gallant, but excitable, population of the Palmetto State would probably, a little later, have led to the repeal of the Ordinance of Secession. Harmony would thus have been restored. If the border States had presented an unbroken front to the North, the civil war would have been averted, or if not, the North, had she entered upon the task of coercion, must have been driven from the field defeated, and overthrown. In the border States, however, other counsels prevailed. Notwithstanding the earnest efforts of the influential Union party in each, it was found impossible to band the people together in support of a common cause. There was a fatal division of sentiment, and, while halting between two opinions, Maryland was overrun by Federal troops, and was thus hopelessly lost to the South, though many of her sons found their way into the Southern army, and served with credit through the war.*

* That General Lee himself believed that Maryland would have joined the Southern Confederacy, but for her occupation by Federal

Kentucky and Missouri fell away in the same manner. Virginia herself was divided into two hostile camps. The leaders of the secession party were Henry A. Wise, John Letcher, J. M. Masson, James Barbour, R. M. T. Hunter, William Ritchie, O. Jennings Wise, T. S. Bowcock, James Lyons, J. M. Daniels, Roger A. Pryor and others of less note. On the other hand, the leaders of the Conservative party were W. C. Rives, Robert E. Scott, Labal A. Early, W. B. Preston, Colonel W. M. Peyton, J. H. Gilmer, Alexander H. H. Stuart, John B. Baldwin, W. T. Willey, I. S. Carlile, John Lewis, S. Mc. D. Moore, I. M. Bolts, C. H. Lewis, Joseph Segar, Alexander Rives, J. J. Jackson, Peachy Gratton, and

forces, is apparent from the following Proclamation issued by him when he marched the army of northern Virginia into the State in 1862:—

*Head Quarters, Army of Northern Virginia,
near Fredericktown, September 8th, 1862.*

TO THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND,

It is right that you should know the purpose that has brought the army under my command within the limits of your State, so far as that purpose concerns yourselves.

The people of the Confederate States have long watched with the deepest sympathy the wrongs and outrages that have been inflicted upon the citizens of a Commonwealth allied to the States of the South by the strongest social, political, and commercial ties, and reduced to the condition of a conquered province.

Under the pretence of supporting the Constitution, but in violation of its most valuable provisions, your citizens have been arrested and imprisoned, upon no charge, and contrary to all the forms of law.

A faithful and manly protest against this outrage, made by a venerable and illustrious Marylander, to whom in his better days no citizen appealed for right in vain, was treated with scorn and contempt.

The Government of your chief city has been usurped by armed strangers; your Legislature has been dissolved by the unlawful arrest of its members; freedom of the press and of speech has been suppressed;

others less familiar to the public. Virginia thus torn by faction was soon in arms against herself. Vain were the efforts of the Government at Richmond to maintain its authority in the north-western counties after the defeat of the confederate army under General Robert S. Garnett, and the unsuccessful campaigns in the Kenawha valley of Generals H. A. Wise and J. B. Floyd. The north-western counties and those on the Kenawha organized a new State under a provisional Government (June 11th 1861,) which was admitted into the Federal Union on the 31st of the following December.

In order to avert, if possible, a civil war among Virginians, such as that which soon raged among Kentuckians, Missourians, and Tennesseans, Colonel

words have been declared offences by an arbitrary decree of the Federal executive; and citizens ordered to be tried by military commissions for what they may dare to speak.

Believing that the people of Maryland possess a spirit too lofty to submit to such a Government, the people of the South have long wished to aid you in throwing off this foreign yoke, to enable you again to enjoy the inalienable rights of freemen, and restore the independence and sovereignty of your State.

In obedience to this wish, our army has come among you, and is prepared to assist you with the power of its arms in regaining the rights of which you have been so unjustly despoiled.

This, citizens of Maryland, is our mission so far as you are concerned. No restraint upon your free will is intended—no intimidation will be allowed, within the limits of this army at least. Marylanders shall once more enjoy their ancient freedom of thought and speech. We know no enemies among you, and will protect all of you in every opinion.

It is for you to decide your destiny freely and without constraint. This army will respect your choice, whatever it may be; and while the southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free will.

R. E. LEE, General Commanding.

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Peyton addressed the letter which closes this chapter, and dated the 8th of January, 1861, to Mr. Rives, who gave it to the public through the daily papers and in pamphlet form. It was widely circulated as a political tract, and was everywhere read with deep interest, but the wise and moderate counsels it inculcated were unavailing. In the frenzied condition of the public mind his letter was but as a whisper in the ear of death, like the pilot's speaking trumpet, the sound of which is drowned by the howlings of the tempest.

On 7th of January, 1861, the Legislature of Virginia assembled in Richmond. Governor Letcher in his message stated that "all see, know, and feel that the danger is imminent, that all true patriots are exerting themselves to save the country from impending perils." He proposed that a convention of all the states should meet, and said "it is monstrous to see a government like ours destroyed merely because men cannot agree about a domestic institution. It becomes Virginia to be mindful of her own interests. A disruption is inevitable, and if two new confederations are to be formed, we must have the best guarantees before we can attach Virginia to either of them." He charged the state of affairs upon the Northern States and said upon them would rest the responsibility of disunion, if it occurred. He further declared that any attempt of Federal troops to pass through Virginia for the purpose of coercing a southern

State would be considered as an act of invasion, which would be repelled. He concluded by saying "Let New England and Western New York be sloughed off and ally themselves with Canada."

In the House of Delegates a committee was appointed and instructed to bring in a bill for assembling a State convention, and anti-coercion resolutions were passed. In these the House declared that any attempt to coerce a State would be resisted by Virginia. The State Convention met in Richmond, February 13th, and after a warm discussion on the 17th of April, passed an ordinance of secession, similar to that adopted by South Carolina. Thus the last hope of amicable adjustment perished, and all men, north and south, prepared for war, for that desolating war which soon followed and continued with unparalleled fury, down to the surrender of General Lee and the Confederate army on the 9th of April, 1865, at Appomatox Bridge.

The beginning of strife, says Solomon, is as the letting out of water, so continuous and persistent is the flow, so like to a mighty torrent, which overspreads and carries all before it, and so fraught with consequences as difficult to forecast as to avert.

The history of the war, which Colonel Peyton sought to prevent by his judicious and repeated appeals to the reason and feelings of the people of both north and south, illustrates in a remarkable manner the wise-man's saying. By that fratricidal strife more than half a continent was filled with mourning, and the wail of victims ;

whole States, each greater in territorial extent than most European kingdoms, were laid waste, private property to an enormous amount was destroyed both by land and sea, passions, as terrific as ever raged in the human breast, welled up to the surface and spread like a volcanic eruption over the surface of society; humanitarians thirsted for human blood, the sacred office of the Christian ministry was prostituted to a wild and unreasoning fanaticism, and debt and taxation increased with portentous rapidity. But the most depressing feature of the struggle was the enormous expenditure of human life. Official reports show that upwards of a million of men perished on the field of battle, in the hospitals, and at their homes from wounds, or diseases contracted by exposure. And all of this was the result of a war, which however it might end, could cause no feelings of satisfaction or triumph to either party

When, however, war became inevitable, he embraced the Southern cause, and sacrificed his all to make it successful. Among his friends and fellow Virginians who entertained similar opinions and were drawn against their better judgment into the struggle, was General Robert E. Lee, who, in a letter addressed to his sister, dated "Arlington, Virginia, April 20th, 1861. said :

"The whole South is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn, and, though I recognize no necessity for this state of things, and would have foreborne and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question, whether I should

take part against my native State. With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. * * I know you will blame me, but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavoured to do what I thought right. " *

What Lee's struggle of mind must have been at the time may be seen from the following passage in a letter sent by Mrs. Lee, December 1861, to a Union friend. She says " my husband has wept tears of blood over this terrible war, but he must, as a man of honour and a Virginian, share the destiny of his State, which has solemnly pronounced for independence. "

LETTER FROM
COLONEL WILLIAM MADISON PEYTON,
TO
HONOURABLE WILLIAM C. RIVES,
ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE EDITOR OF THE " NEW YORK EXPRESS " (NEWSPAPER), IN WHICH COLONEL PEYTON'S LETTER ORIGINALLY APPEARED, TO THE SECOND PAMPHLET EDITION :—

" The spirited discussion which follows, upon the exciting questions of the country, has been most widely

* See p. 37 " Southern Generals, who they are, and what they have done. " N. Y., 1873.

circulated, and read as an eloquent expression of the feelings and hopes of a large—of much the largest portion—of the American people. It is timely, earnest and unanswerable. The first issue of copies having been entirely exhausted, the author, at the request of many friends, in various parts of the country, has permitted a second edition to be brought out, to which some additional notes are appended. Could the views he has expressed in his letter to Mr. Rives have received their appropriate valuation and influence, the country would still continue its course of unexampled prosperity and happiness.”

THE EDITOR.

New York, January 8th, 1861.

“My dear Sir,

“We are in the midst of a revolution, bloodless as yet, but no one feels assured that the rising sun will run its diurnal course before the pillars of our constitution will be covered with the blood of its citizens. An unholy crusade has been preached, and factious political combinations have been formed in the North, which are destructive of all fraternal feelings between the two sections, and utterly at war with a fair and equal administration of the Government. A deep and wide-spread dissatisfaction has thus been excited in the South, which has grown stronger and stronger, fiercer and fiercer, until at last it has culminated in one of the States loosing herself from the

moorings of the constitution, and committing her destiny to the perilous waves of Secession and Revolution. Other States are verging to the same path, and their leaders, almost with one voice, advocate the policy of precipitation and separate State action.

“‘To precipitate the cotton States into revolution,’ is a remark which traces its paternity to Mr. Yancy, the great leader of the disunion movement, and, whatever of wisdom or folly attaches to it, is his by indisputable title. It is certainly all the rage at present. You see it in relief on every newspaper, side by side with the ‘irrepressible conflict,’ and you hear it repeated by every flippant declaimer, whether on the stump or in the grog-shop, until, in spite of its objectionable character, it has become the Shibboleth of the South, and is cherished as a master-stroke of statesmanlike policy.

What better evidence can we have of the insane state of the public mind, than that the people should rally under a sentiment so monstrous and indefensible. For a people to ‘precipitate themselves into revolution,’ is like a maddened horse, who seizes the bit in his mouth, and rushes headlong over a precipice. Precipitancy never acknowledges the reins of reason, and hasty and impulsive action is always the sure harbinger of repentance and remorse. A great question, involving the fate of a Government and the happiness of millions, should certainly be approached carefully, considered calmly, determined cautiously, and with a full appreciation of the weighty issues and responsibilities involved.

“It is true, we have been grievously wronged by the unwarrantable and hostile interference with our domestic institutions by the fanatical portion of the North, and it is right that we should manifest our purpose of vindicating our rights, under the constitution. Common sense and common prudence would say, that, as disunion is a terrible alternative, a gulf of evils, which no man can fathom, we should first exhaust all constitutional means of redress, before we involve ourselves in universal destruction, by pulling down the pillars of our temple.

“The late elections, which resulted in favour of the Black Republican party, not because of their positive strength, but as the consequence of our divisions, has demonstrated that we have a great many warm and devoted friends in the North upon whom we can rely in any emergency. Recent developments have shown, too, that their ranks are rapidly gaining accessions from the moderate and conservative portion of the Republican party and justifies the opinion that the day is near at hand when they will be the dominant party, and exercise a controlling influence. The issue which they have made, and upon which they stand, is the same which vitalizes the contest between the North and the South. When the reaction, which is now in such rapid progress, places their constitutional party in the ascendant, a conservative policy will be inaugurated, and the rights of the South will be recognized, and placed on a firm basis. They will concede all the guarantees we require and unite with us in

maintaining the constitution, and the laws made in pursuance of its provisions, in the true spirit of the instrument. Can it be otherwise with a party, which acknowledge such leaders as O'Connor, Dickinson, Hunt, Seymour, and Tillmore, and such organs as those bold defenders of our rights, the *Herald*, *Express*, *Journal of Commerce* and *Day-Book*? * If this is a just picture of the condition of things around and before us, what madness is it to destroy the fairest fabric of Government that God, in his providence, has ever vouchsafed to man! What plausible apology can be offered for such fatuity? In the Gulf States, I am aware, they have schooled themselves into the preposterous opinion that the Union is a galling yoke upon their necks, of which they should rid themselves, and that when freed from its restraints and impositions, they will advance in wealth, population, power and greatness, with a rapidity unparalleled in the history of the world. Without stopping to dissect this vainglorious and shallow opinion, or to point out the thousand impediments to the fruition of their golden visions, I would enquire if there is any respectable portion of the border Slave States of Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, etc., who do not believe that all their dearest interests would be imperilled, and all the brightest hopes and most cherished memories blighted, by the dissolution of the Union. All who know

* To this list may be added the *Daily News*, the *Freeman's Journal*, *Staats Zeitung*, and numerous other weekly papers, all of whom have manifested a liberal and catholic spirit in this crisis of the country.

those States must admit that their response would be one of loyalty and devotion to the Union. They have too much sagacity and good sense, too much prudence and virtue and patriotism to be deluded by such hair brained nonsense. They have too much gratitude for the noble sacrifices of our Revolutionary fathers; they venerate too sincerely the immortal charter they bequeathed us, and they appreciate too highly the manifold blessings they have enjoyed under its auspices, to raise their parricidal hands for its destruction, until its provisions have been perverted into an insupportable tyranny, and all reasonable efforts to reform abuses have proved abortive.

“History has been strikingly said to be ‘Philosophy teaching by example,’ and I would ask if there is any more settled and indubitable axiom drawn from the political throes and convulsions of the world, than that a people should never overturn one Government until they see their way to a better? Any Government is better than anarchy. If there are evils in the system, they should be probed and healed. If there are grievances, they should strive to have them redressed. If there are deficiencies, they should labour to have them supplied. If there is tyranny, it should be curbed after the manner of the patriotic barons of our Fatherland at Runnymede; but never unnecessarily plunge the country into all the horrors of anarchy and civil war, with desolated hearths, decimated families, and the prostration of all interests, social, commercial, agricultural and religious.

“The probabilities are, that the States of our confede-

racy will never dissolve peaceably, and that whenever they do separate, they will tear apart violently. The ties which bind us together, are not of a character to be lightly and easily broken. Our common origin, our common language and institutions—with one exception—our common struggle in the Revolutionary contest, the joint inheritance of the glory which sheds itself over our past history, the pride universally felt in the growth and greatness of our country, and the cherished anticipation that the day is not distant when the United States will take precedence of all the nations of the earth—these constitute ties, which can only be severed as Alexander severed the gordian knot. It will never be done until the people are maddened by a sense of deep injury and driven headlong by feelings so exasperated as to be reckless of consequences. The cause of irritation, unless promptly arrested, will increase, and the spirit of resentment, retaliation and revenge will intensify with each new complaint, until at last violence will break the bonds of union, and blood will flow in just such profusion as the respective sections may deem sufficient to wash out the wrongs they have suffered. All constituted authority being broken down, all reverence for the past and respect for the present being swept away, revolution springs up as an indigenous plant, and seizing the charter of our liberties, rends it to pieces, and overturning the Government, inaugurates a reign of anarchy, bloodshed and civil war. Such is the goal to which we are travelling; such is the abyss to which we are hastening.

Indeed, we have reached the brink, and another step is destruction—another step and we precipitate ourselves into a gulf, the fathomless depths of which no eye is keen enough to discern.

“Now, it is undeniably true, that the Northern States are justly responsible for opening up those fountains of bitterness which flood the land with their poisonous waters. Fanatics, inspired by a demoniacal frenzy, co-operating with heartless demagogues and corrupt party organization, have succeeded, by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, in gaining a political ascendancy in the North, and, profiting by a want of concert among the friends of the Constitution, have elected the candidate of their party to the Presidency.

“Upon the temporary and *transient* event (Lincoln's election) the South are thrown into the most violent state of excitement, and, in their indignation, swear that they will not submit to their defeat, but that they will dissolve all connection with a people who have manifested by this election a deliberate purpose to bring them into subjection, and inaugurate a policy which will undermine slavery. The objection is certainly well taken and the cause of discontent well founded, but the remedy proposed partakes a great deal more of passion than thought, more of violence than reason, more of chivalrous impulse than of statesman-like prudence and wisdom.

“The President was elected by a little over one-third of the votes polled, by a meagre plurality—and will come into power with his constitutional advisers in the

senate against him, so that he will be utterly powerless and unable to advance a single step in the administration of the Government, except at the will and pleasure of the defeated party. The rights of the South, whatever may be the disposition of the executive, are, for the present, perfectly protected. They occupy the vantage ground, and risk nothing in deliberate action. In this condition of things, she should have improved her advantage by constraining the action and policy of the executive.

“The occasion, too, would be most opportune to demand of the North a full and distinct recognition of the rights of the South, the abrogation of all unfriendly laws, and the final adjustment of all causes of complaint and difference. This course, taken with determined firmness, would have secured unanimity and concert of action throughout the South, and would have commanded the hearty approbation and co-operation of the noble body of patriotic citizens, who stood by us with unflinching courage in the late contest, and who polled more votes in our favour than the South gave themselves. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this policy would have been successful. If otherwise, then, when we had exhausted all constitutional means of redress, and time and circumstances had rendered more certain the fixed purpose of the Republican party to degrade and enslave us, to strip us of our just rights and maintain the control of the Government upon a sectional basis, the South would be prepared, upon such corroboration, with unbroken front, and with the

approbation of the civilized world, to demand the recognition of all their rights under the constitution, with such *ultimatum* as their wisdom might suggest.

“Whether that alternative should be war in the Union or out of it, it would be sustained with unanimity and alacrity by the whole South, backed in all probability by the great middle States, and New York, the great, national, conservative city of the Union.

“If there is any force or truth in this hypothesis, does it leave a single loophole to hang a doubt that a wise comprehension of the interests of the South requires them to pursue the course indicated? Some would condemn it as a Fabian policy, but such was the policy of Washington, and such will ever be the policy of those who think before they act, who ponder well on consequences before they provoke them, and who sound the depths of the ocean over which they are to sail, before they commit themselves to its waters.

“South Carolina, shutting her eyes to all prudential considerations, has adopted and avowed the opposite policy. Without consultation with her sister States, without co-operation, and almost without countenance from more than a minority of the Slave States, in disregard and contempt of the appeals and wishes of those exposed and most aggrieved by northern interference, she has thrown herself, with headlong impetuosity, into a labyrinth of inextricable difficulty, sundering and trampling under foot the golden chain which bound together our glorious Union, and complicating the unhappy controversy which agitates the

the country, so as to fill every patriot's heart with the utmost apprehensions for the issue. She makes no appeal to her erring and offending sisters. She gives no time or opportunity for reformation. She leaps with one bound to a rash resolve, and with equal haste to action. She spurns the advice of those who have a common interest with her, and flouts, through her organ, with most offensive presumption, the gallant old Commonwealth of Virginia, whose chivalry and patriotism, whose justice and prudence, whose steady valour and consummate wisdom, have been always illustrated by her sons, before whose historic renown Carolina always has and ever must 'pale her ineffectual fires.' [See Note A.]

"By this course Carolina weakens the cause of the South. She creates division among those who should be and who would be united under a wise conduct of their difficulties. She drives off our allies in the North, and, of course, strengthens the power we have to contend with. In fine, she attains nothing, and mars everything. She cures no evil; she redresses no grievance; she vindicates no right; she rights no wrong; but on the contrary, aggravates all her troubles, and complicates her difficulties, so as to defy their solution by the wisest heads. Folly, madness, and a reckless disregard of consequences, rule her counsels, and there is no telling what damage she may not do to herself and others in her unbridled fury. She may be likened in her dismemberment to a planet, which, by some disturbance of the forces that keep each orb in its proper sphere, is driven through space, impelled alone

in its eccentric movements by its internal fires, and endangering in its path the whole heavenly system! To be the tail to such a comet would be the hardest of fates. It would imply on the part of Virginia a want of self respect, a lack of proper pride, a painful degeneracy, and a demoralization, which ill comports with her past history.

“Without wasting more words in the discussion of the past, or criticising what is irrevocable, let us probe the issues as they exist, and lay them open to the core, that we may be the better enabled to apply such remedies as are necessary for the restoration of our afflicted Government. Virginia, whose interests are our especial object of consideration, and whose policy, by parity of reason, should be the policy of all the other border slaveholding States, is the oldest of them all, as she is also the most populous, and of greater territory.

“She stands in the centre of the confederacy, and represents in her staples the interests alike of the planter and the grain-grower, and not inconsiderably those of the grazier and manufacturer. She furnished the matchless hero who was a ‘pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night,’ in our struggle for freedom; she furnished the orator whose inspired eloquence thrilled the colonies with patriotic feeling; she furnished the genius which penned the Declaration of Independence; she furnished the civilian who was the chief architect of our constitution. Out of our loins sprang Kentucky, and her generosity gave to the Union the great Western States, extending from her border to the Mississippi.

In all the patriotic movements which initiated the revolution, in all the measures which marked its progress, in all the features which were stamped on our Charter of Union, and in the administration of the Government, she has exerted an influence beyond any other State. To love the Union, therefore, is with her most natural and almost inevitable.

“Under the constitution, Virginia has been prosperous, contented, and happy, her children have grown up with the idea that it was as sacred as the ark of the covenant, and that under its shadow we reposed in peace and security, and in the enjoyment of all rights and privileges consistent with the largest liberty. All were taught to revere it as the precious legacy of patriotism and wisdom, and to cling with filial devotion to the Union as the great palladium of their liberties. In the meantime, however, a cloud, which for a while was just visible above the northern horizon, scarcely exciting observation, has increased in size until it has spread itself like a pall over the political heavens, and awakened a feeling of distrust, anxiety, and apprehension for the safety of our institutions. A fanatical abolitionism, which feeds upon its own ravings and grows by what it feeds on, has adopted the pseudo-philosophy of the Jacobins, and by connecting themselves with corrupt party and political organizations, have acquired a political ascendancy in so many of the non-slave-holding States, as to enable them, by the assistance of our divisions, to elevate their candidate to the presidency.

“This is certainly a condition of things well calculated to arouse the fears of the South, and prompt them to active efforts to avert the evil, and ward off threatened danger. All agree that the evil is serious and imminent, and that the measures for our protection should be taken without delay. Postponement, now that the attention of the whole nation is aroused to its consideration, would weaken our position, and we must face the tide of fanaticism, and arrest its further progress. In doing this it is the policy of all, and most obviously that of Virginia, and all others than the Gulf States, so to accomplish the desired result, as to leave our glorious Union intact, and its stars and stripes still floating over us as a united people.

“A great many plans have been suggested in and out of Congress, many of which would, doubtless, be acceptable to the great body of the nation, but none of which will satisfy the extremists. In the desire to please all, we offend all; and while the time of Congress is wasted in first one and then another abortive scheme, the disease is making fearful headway, and the never-to-be-recalled opportunity for healthful measures passes by. The face of the political heavens changes with every circuit of the sun, and measures which would have been efficacious on one day, have no virtue on the next. The constitutional means which, if exercised in season, would probably have been equal to the emergency, are of more questionable potency since the strategic movements at Charleston, and the impotent labors of the Senate and Congressional committees, have brought

the Government and the Carolinians into such a position that force must almost necessarily be employed. Should then all constitutional means be rejected as inadequate, let the middle States and the border Slave States unite together on some just and equitable basis which secures the slave-holding States all the guarantees required for the rendition of slaves, for the right of transit without molestation throughout the Union, and for equal privileges in the territories.

“The great central Union, embracing the heart and strength of the nation, its wealth, its population and its capital, would, by the happy working of the old constitution under new influences, by its rapid growth in all that constitutes national greatness, by its dignified and important position among the powers of the earth, by the contentment, the happiness and the prosperity of its law-and-order-loving and law-abiding citizens, be the admiration, as it would be the model Government of the world. Those States who in a moment of exacerbation, either from wrongs inflicted or passions and prejudices aroused, had withdrawn themselves from the confederacy, would soon have their follies cured by bitter experience; and feeling and comprehending the disadvantages of their position, they would easily seek annexation with us, and gladly embrace the basis fixed by us. Moreover, this consolidation of all the great central States, will serve to keep apart the belligerent extremes of New England and the Cotton States, and will furthermore effectually protect the middle States from the evils of anarchy and civil war. Nor need they

fear any serious contests with the States on their northern or southern borders, as their overwhelming superiority would shield them effectually.

“Virginia, in her exposed position as a border State, suffers severely, and complains bitterly of the wrongs inflicted upon her; but she cannot see how a separation from the Union will redress her grievances, increase her security, or fortify her rights. She cannot comprehend how the abrogation of all compacts for the preservation of our institutions, the breaking down of all judicial tribunals established for their protection, and the sundering of all the ties of patriotism, which must to some extent, stretch forth the arms of sympathy and justice to aid us, will add to our repose, quiet our apprehensions, or rid us of the vexatious annoyances the irritating controversies, or the flagrant abduction of our slaves, which now exist. On the contrary, she takes warning from the impunity and protection extended by Canada to our fugitives, and fairly concludes that separation would strengthen the abolition influence and power, and magnify and aggravate all the troubles which now disturb her as a member of the Confederacy.

“The dogma of peaceable constitutional secession, as claimed by the South, is a solecism, subversive of all just authority, and revolutionary of necessity. It denies to the Government the power of protecting and perpetuating itself, and converts what was intended to be a perfect union, to endure ‘*forever*,’ into a rope of sand, to be separated by every disturbing cause. It impairs the political dignity and utterly destroys the financial

credit of the Government, weakening the force of all treaty stipulations and making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for loans to be negotiated to meet the exigencies of the nation. Indeed, every fair and legitimate argument, abstractly considered, is conclusive against this doctrine.

“ But the history of the formation of our Government sheds its full light upon it, there is no room left for argument, there is no obscurity in which ingenuity may grope for specious excuses without having its nakedness exposed. Without dwelling upon the fact, that the old Confederation was a bond of ‘perpetual union,’ and that our present constitution was intended to form a more ‘perfect union,’ the correspondence between the representatives of New York and Virginia is conclusive of the question. Mr. Hamilton suggests that New York will come into the Union, with the reservation that she shall have the privilege of leaving it, if it should not work to her satisfaction; to which Mr. Madison replies emphatically that this mode of adopting the Constitution has been mooted, and it was decided that it would invalidate the ratification, and that none could be received who did not accept the Constitution absolutely, unqualifiedly, and forever. This is certainly clear and explicit, and leaves nothing further to be said. Secession, then, is revolution, and Carolina, upon the theory of our Government, is in a State of revolt and rebellion—so will be all those States who follow in her footsteps. The right of coercion in the Government follows as a corollary. But it does not follow, by any means, that it will be

wise or judicious to exercise this right. From the peculiar structure of our Government, the issue is not exactly analogous to a rebellious province, as our States, in the formation of our Union, reserved a larger share of sovereignty, and preserved more completely the forms and appliances of an independent people than is found in the provinces of any other Government. Hence, when they secede or revolt, they present themselves with the dignity of a regular Government, which of itself gives power and respectability, and necessitates a great modification of the means to be employed to reduce them or win them back to their Constitutional obligations. [*See Note B.*]

“In the existing revolution, where one State openly defies the authority of the Constitution, and where a great many other States, from identity of interest, community of feeling, and the strongest sympathy, are ready, with the sound of the first Federal gun, to draw their swords and risk their lives and fortunes with Carolina. However much they may condemn her precipitancy, it would be madness to provoke a controversy which would only drench each section with blood, without bringing back the dissatisfied States. On the contrary while smoking cities and desolated fields would mark the devastating progress of the armies, a deep rooted and vindictive hostility would spring up from these bloody enactments, that would render a restoration of fraternal relations impossible.

“It is better, therefore, now that this dissatisfaction has grown to such magnitude, that the States which

have resolved on separation should be allowed to go in peace, and that all unnecessary causes of irritation should be avoided. This will leave the distracting questions which divide us, and which have produced this calamitous State of things, to be settled by the States which remain. Should they be satisfactorily adjusted, then the Government will move on as heretofore, winning for itself at every step, the applause and admiration of the world. The States, which in a moment of excitement, had left us, finding all the obnoxious weeds in our system pulled up, and having their feelings of irritation mollified by time and our forbearing policy, would in all probability, resume their position in our glorious galaxy of States. This, in my judgment, is the best solution of our difficulties, and the only mode of which I can conceive, to avert civil war and the dismemberment of our Union, with its flood of untold calamities.

“For the present, the public mind in the border Slave States is unfortunately captivated with the idea that a solution of all our troubles is to be found in the scheme of a general “break up” and “reconstruction” of the Union. But, with uplifted hands and an overflowing heart, I would warn my countrymen against this fatal delusion. We have all been taught from children to look upon the Union as too sacred to be profaned by the impiety that would pluck a single star from its firmament, or displace a single stone in the structure. Would you break down this reverence for our political temple?

“When, with ruthless vandalism, you have pulled down this honoured monument of the wisdom and virtues of your fathers, under whose shelter you have grown with unparalleled thrift in strength, intelligence, in wealth and power, in commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and science, until you are recognized as one of the greatest powers of the earth, do you flatter yourself that those who break this crystal goblet can mend it without marring its beauty? Do you think that the madness which undermines and demolishes the temple will be a safe reliance for its reconstruction? A cool judgment can only yield a negative response. An instinctive sense of the blessings flowing from our Union, which, with patriotic people, rises to a religious sentiment, gives it a charmed power, which exercises a most salutary influence upon their character and conduct. The respect, affection and reverence, which strike their roots in the heart of the people, and which entwine themselves around the pillars of a Government which has afforded them perfect security in the pursuit of happiness, which has opened wide the portals of human progress, by unmuzzling the press, untrammelling the conscience, and by making every citizen an active agent in the double character of sovereign and subject in its administration, thrown around it bulwarks for its defence and support, whose adamantine ramparts can never be scaled, until demoralization has sapped the foundations of public and private virtue.

“In overturning this Government, then, with the hope of constructing from the scattered elements a

better, do you not incur a fearful hazard? Is it reasonable to expect, in these days of degeneracy and party excess, a frame of Government more just, more liberal, more wise, better moulded to suit the diversified interests, to balance the conflicting views, and harmonize the disturbing elements of the different States and various sections, than that created by those intellectual Titans who achieved our liberties, and who gave us this Constitution, as the cap-sheaf of their patriotic labours?

“History lights up the past to little purpose, and experience enforces its lessons uselessly, if the people can be led to entertain any such fallacious hopes. Tear down this crowning work of heroes, chastened by a seven years’ struggle of patriots, animated and inspired by a just and holy cause, of men who with boundless devotion, consecrated their all to accomplish the great work, and you will find it a labour of Sisyphus to return to the summit from which you have fallen. You will find that the age affords no anchor of hope and salvation to supply the place of the immortal father and founder of our Government.

“These conservative views are pressed the more earnestly from a conviction that the great body of the people desire to preserve and perpetuate the Union, if it can be done without a degrading sacrifice of their rights and honour, and that a patient, forbearing, determined policy on the part of the South, resolutely insisting on the full recognition of their rights under the Constitution, as set forth in the resolutions of Mr.

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Crittenden, will be conceded and corroborated, by an amendment to the Constitution, making their recognition perpetual. Any plan, which will stay aggression, and give the 'sober second thought' of the people time to disabuse their minds, soothe their excited feelings, and calmly weigh the mighty consequences involved in their action, must have a happy tendency in adjusting all our difficulties. It is, of course, the obvious duty of every well-wisher to the perpetuity of the Union, to discountenance every measure which leads to collision. Let all pour oil upon the angry waves, and the ship of State may yet reach a safe anchorage.

"Twenty odd years since, you unfurled the banner of Conservatism, and I stood by your side in its defence; we have never hauled down that flag. It is the standard borne by the *juste milieu* of every nation when evoking order from anarchy. It represents truth, justice, moderation and courage; and if the nation should rally under its folds, it will be regenerated, fraternity will be restored, and the Constitution vindicated.

"I am, with sentiments of esteem,

"Yours truly,

"W. M. PEYTON."

Note A.—Ten years since, (in 1851,) South Carolina, under one of her periodical excitements, was threatening secession, one of the most trusted and distinguished of her sons, the Hon. W. W. Boyce, addressed a protest against secession to the people of his State, in which was introduced the following

remark: "South Carolina cannot become a nation; God makes nations, not man; you cannot extemporize a nation out of South Carolina. It is simply impossible; we have not the resources. We could exist by tolerance—and what that tolerance would be, when we consider the present hostile spirit of the age to the institution of slavery, of which we would be looked upon as the peculiar exponent, all may readily imagine. I trust we never may look upon the painful and humiliating spectacle.

"From the weakness of our National Government, a feeling of insecurity would arise, and capital would take the alarm and leave us. But it may be said, let capital go. To this I reply that capital is the life-blood of a modern community, and in losing it, you lose the vitality of the State. Secession, separate Nationality, with all its burdens, is no remedy. It is no redress for the past, nor security for the future. It is only a magnificent sacrifice of the present, without in any wise gaining in the future. We are told, however, that it is resistance, and we must not submit to the late action of Congress. Now I would like to know which one of these measures we resist by secession? It is not the prohibition of slave-marts in the district of Columbia. It is not the purchase of Texas territory. It is certainly not the admission of California. Which aggression, then, do we resist by secession? These are all the recent aggressions which we resist now by secession. Secession, gallant as may be the spirit which prompts it, is only a new form of submission.

For the various reasons I have stated, I object, in as strong terms as I can, to the secession of South Carolina. Such is the intensity of my conviction upon the subject, that, if secession should take place—of which I have no idea, for I cannot believe in the existence of such a *stupendous madness*—I shall consider the institution of slavery as doomed, and that the Great God in our blindness has made us the instrument of its destruction.”

Note B.—The advocates of secession claim that it is a reserved right, in the exercise of which a State may secede peaceably and constitutionally, without let or hindrance. It leads to a confusion of ideas to confound it with revolution. Revolution is a revolt, with a view to overturning the Government, by those who are its legitimate subjects, and who, from dissatisfaction, have combined to rid themselves of its yoke. Secession, as claimed, is an inherent and reserved State right—a simple, natural, peaceful dissolution of a compact or co-partnership, which is binding only so long as it may, in the judgment or caprice of the parties, be promotive of their interests.

That this right cannot co-exist with our nationality, is obvious. A nation is a body politic, presenting a consolidated front to the world, and so firmly knit together as to be able to preserve its integrity against any transient want of coherence in any of its parts.

It is not a mere union of independent nations bound by a treaty, but a solid, compact, national Government,

with all the great essential attributes of sovereignty, reaching and sheltering the humblest citizen in the remotest corner of its territory, Its national unity is manifested in its legislative, judicial, and executive functions—recognised everywhere as supreme within its sphere—and in its flag, which is unfurled upon the ramparts of every fort within its territorial limits, and which floats at the mast-head of every ship which leaves its ports. The world deals with us as a nation possessed of political unity. It is not competent for them to comprehend all the intricate workings of our internal and complex machinery. They only look to the externals, and, recognizing us as a nation possessed of the usual attributes of nationality, they hold us to all the responsibilities of such a relation.

Mr. Madison, who is the highest authority in regard to the Constitution, as he was the chief architect of it, says that our Government is, in some of its aspects, consolidated, and in others confederated. He says it was not formed by the Government of the component States as the Federal Government, for which it was substituted; nor was it formed by a majority of the people of the United States as a single community, in the manner of a consolidated Government. It was formed by the State—that is, by the people in each of the States, acting in their highest sovereign capacity, and formed, consequently, by the same authority which formed the State Constitutions. Being thus derived from the same source as the Constitutions of the States, it has within each State the same authority as the

constitution of the State, and is as much a constitution, in the strict sense of the term, within its prescribed sphere, as the constitution of the States are within their respective spheres; but with this essential and obvious difference, that being a compact among the States in their highest sovereign capacity, and constituting the people thereof one people, for certain purposes, it cannot be altered or annulled at the will of the States individually, as the constitution of the State may at its individual will. If this be sound reasoning, it is clear that we are a *nation*, and, within the limits of the constitution, one people. The constitution prescribes boundaries to our internal administration, but to the world we present a national face, by which alone we are known and recognized, whether it be in public loans, or treaty stipulations, in declaring war or concluding a peace.

During our late war with Great Britain, the New England States, under the pressure of the Embargo laws, which paralyzed all the leading interests of that portion of our country, became so dissatisfied with the burdens of the national policy, that she sent Delegates to the Hartford Convention, to consult as to the mode and manner of redress, and some of its members advanced the theory that they had a right to "Secede from the Union?" The mere intimation of such a purpose fired the whole nation with indignation, and the stigma of having been a member of the convention could never be effaced, but, like the mark of Cain, followed all its members through life. The Richmond

Enquirer, then under the able management of Mr. Ritchie, and commanding the confidence of the Democracy in the highest degree, commented upon the proposed movement in the following forcible terms:—

“No man, no association of one State, or set of States, has a right to withdraw from the Union, on its own account. The same power which knit us together, can unknit us; the same formality which formed the limits of the Union is necessary to dissolve it. The majority of the States which form the Union, must consult as to the withdrawal of any one branch of it. Until that consent has been obtained, any attempt to dissolve the Union, or distract the efficiency of its constitutional law, is treason—*treason to all intents and purposes.*”

The incongruity and absurdity of this doctrine is, perhaps, made more manifest by its practical workings; *e. g.* Louisiana was purchased from the French at a cost of 15,000,000 dols., and a dangerous stretch of Constitutional power. But the assumption of power was overlooked, and the debt cheerfully paid, to secure to the United States, and especially to the vast country growing up on the Mississippi and its tributaries, the navigation of the Mississippi and the command of its outlet to the Gulf. Now the doctrine of secession would sustain Louisiana, a mere infinitesimal portion of this great region, in seceding, and thus defeating the whole object of the purchase. Florida was purchased at a cost of 10,000,000 dols., and the Indians removed at a further cost of 40,000,000 dols. or 50,000,000 dols.

and now that she is able to stand on her feet, she would unceremoniously, under the doctrine of secession, walk out of the Union, without returning a dollar of what she has cost. Cuba we have proposed to purchase at a cost of 120,000,000 dols., because we view it as the key to the Gulf, into which is poured the vast trade floated down the Mississippi. Yet, under this doctrine, it would be admissible for Cuba to secede from the Union at her pleasure, and sell herself, if she pleased, to some other power. These instances constitute a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole doctrine. It is impossible that any people of half the sagacity of ours, would ever consent to make such extravagant purchases, unless they felt assured they were securing a hold on them, which could not be wrested against their will.

WILLIAM M. PEYTON.

The spirit, in which the war, that Colonel Peyton so earnestly sought to avert, was waged, when it did occur, by at least a portion of the North against the South, may be conveniently referred to at this point and may be gathered from the address of Colonel Dahlgren to the officers and men composing his command in Virginia. Colonel Dahlgren was killed before reaching Richmond, and his troops dispersed. In his pocket the following orders were found :—

"Head Quarters, Third Division, Cavalry Corps.

"Officers and Men,

"You have been selected from brigades and regiments as a picked command to attempt a desperate undertaking—an undertaking, which, if successful, will write your names on the hearts of your countrymen in letters that can never be erased, and which will cause the prayers of your fellow-soldiers, now confined in loathsome prisons, to follow you and yours wherever you may go. We hope to release the prisoners from Belle Isle first, and having seen them fairly started, we will cross the James River into Richmond, destroy the bridges after us, and exhorting the released prisoners to destroy and burn the hateful city, will not allow the rebel leader, Davis, and his traitorous crew to escape. The prisoners must render great assistance, as you cannot leave your ranks too far, or become too much scattered, or you will be lost. Do not allow any personal gain to lead you off, which would only bring you to an ignominious death at the hands of citizens. Keep well together and obey orders strictly, and all will be well; but on no account scatter too far, for in union there is strength. With strict obedience to orders, and fearlessness in their execution, you will be sure to succeed. We will join the main force on the other side of the city, or perhaps meet them inside. Many of you may fall, but if there is any man here not willing to sacrifice his life in such a great and glorious undertaking, or who does not feel

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capable of meeting the enemy in such a desperate fight as will follow, let him step out, and he may go hence to the arms of his sweetheart, and read of the braves who swept through the city of Richmond. We want no man who cannot feel sure of success in such a holy cause. We will have a desperate fight; but stand up to it when it does come, and all will be well. Ask the blessing of the Almighty, and do not fear the enemy.

U. DAHLGREN, Colonel Commanding.

The following Special Orders were written on a similar sheet of paper, and on detached slips, the whole disclosing the diabolical plans of the leaders of the expedition:—

“SPECIAL ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

“Guides and pioneers, with oakum, turpentine, and torpedoes, signal officer, quartermasters, commissaries, scouts and pickets, and men in rebel uniforms—these will remain on the north bank, and move down with the force on the south bank, not get ahead of them, and if the communication can be kept up without giving an alarm it must be done; but everything depends upon a surprise, and no one must be allowed to pass ahead of the column. Information must be gathered in regard to the crossings of the river, so that should we be repulsed on the south side, we will know where to recross at the nearest point.

"All mills must be burnt and the canals destroyed, and also everything which can be used by the rebels must be destroyed, including the boats on the river. Should a ferry boat be seized which can be worked, have it moved down. Keep the force on the south side posted of any important movement of the enemy, and in case of danger some of the scouts must swim the river and bring us information. As we approach the city, the party must take great care that they do not get ahead of the other party on the south side, and must conceal themselves and watch our movements. We will try and secure the bridge of the city, one mile from Belle Isle, and release the prisoners at the same time. If we do not succeed they must then dash down, and we will try to carry the bridge by storm. When necessary the men must be filed through the woods and along the river bank. The bridge once secured and the prisoners loose and over the river, the bridges will be burnt and the city destroyed.

"The men must be kept together and well in hand, and once in the city, *it must be destroyed, and Jeff Davis and his Cabinet killed.* Pioneers will go along with combustible materials,

"Everything on the canal and elsewhere of service to the rebels must be destroyed.

"As General Custer may follow me, be careful not to give a false alarm. The signal officer must be prepared to communicate at night by rockets, and in other things pertaining to his department. The quartermasters and commissaries must be on the look out for

their departments, and see that there are no delays on their account. The engineer officer will follow, and survey the road as we pass over it, etc. The pioneers must be prepared to construct a bridge or to destroy one. They must have plenty of oakum and turpentine for burning, which will be soaked and rolled into balls and be given to the men to burn when we get into the city. Torpedoes will only be used by the pioneers, for burning the main bridges, etc. They must be prepared to destroy the railroads.

“Men will branch off to the right with a few pioneers and destroy the bridges and railroads south of Richmond, and then join us at the city. They must be well prepared with torpedoes, etc.

“The line of Falling Creek is probably the best to march along, or as they approach the city, Good’s Creek, so that no reinforcements can come upon any cars.

“No one must be allowed to pass ahead for fear of communicating news.

“Rejoin the command with all haste, and if cut off, cross the river above Richmond, and rejoin us. Men will stop at Bellona Arsenal and totally destroy it and everything else but hospitals ; then follow on and rejoin the command at Richmond with all haste, and, if cut off, cross the river and rejoin us. As General Custer may follow me, be careful not to give a false alarm.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER the secession of Virginia, (25th of April, 1861), Colonel Peyton, who had up to this time been detained by business in New York city, prepared to return to the South. The Federal authorities, however, were instructed to watch his movements and to arrest him if he attempted to leave the place. A friend of his informed him of the receipt in New York of orders to this effect from Washington. He heard the news, not without surprise, for up to this time he had taken no part in the revolution except to prevent it if possible, or if not, and it should come, to mitigate its severities. On enquiring of the Federal Marshal for the district of New York, as to the truth of the rumour, and, if true, the grounds upon which the Government based its action he had confirmation of its truth. He was consequently under surveillance, but was allowed to go at large. The Federal officer in New York was considerate enough to say that President Lincoln knew that he, Colonel Peyton, had committed no act of hostility to the Government, but was convinced that he would, if in the South again,

exert his influence on behalf of the Confederate States, with which Virginia had formed an alliance. Fearing this, the President had determined to prevent his return. "If the Government was wrong in this belief" continued the Marshal, "and Colonel Peyton would give his *parole* that he would not engage in the war against the Federal Government, or in any way, by word or action give aid and comfort to the South, he was instructed to take no further account of his movements." Colonel Peyton declined these terms and went immediately to live at the house of his old friend and fellow-countryman, Dr. J. Marion Sims, who had been for some years a resident of the city. Under his hospitable roof he remained some months, subjected to the annoyance of constant overlooking, but in no other way was he molested.

During this period he addressed the following, his second letter, to Mr. William C. Rives, which was published in the New York papers, and afterwards in pamphlet form.

The Editor of the *New York Journal*, introduced it with the following remarks:—

"When Virginia was considering the position that Commonwealth should assume in the existing dislocation of American affairs, and when the Convention of that State was about to assemble for the purpose, Colonel William M. Peyton, then resident temporarily in New York, addressed a letter to his old friend, William C. Rives, with whom he had so long and so honourably co-operated in Virginian politics. Colonel Peyton was so widely known for the broad, statesmanlike, cast of his

mind, and the unsullied generosity of his heart, and stood so eminently a representative of the Virginia school, moulded in association with the great men of our earliest national era, that his letter attracted unusual attention. It was reproduced, again and again, in the journals of different places, and also in pamphlet form. It presented the most solid arguments why Virginia should not link her fortunes, distinctively, with those of the cotton States, in their contemplated revolution.

“Events have hurried on. The second letter, here presented as a sequel to the former, is indicative and empathic, as showing how these events have forced the most wisely Conservative elements of the border States, and statesmen elsewhere, to recognize that the interests of political liberty, and of the sovereignty of freemen over their own forms of Government, require from Virginia and her sister States the repudiation of the perverted authority claimed by the Black Republican hordes of the North, in the abused name of Federal power.

“Friends of the American Union, as it was, and who desire, not party triumph, but the *common good*, have solicited Colonel Peyton to furnish a copy of this second letter for publication.”

EDITOR.